

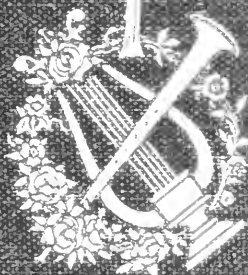
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# *Colonial Verses*



*Ruth Lawrence*





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C. H. Tenney







## Colonial Verses







# COLONIAL VERSES

(MOUNT VERNON)

BY RUTH     
LAWRENCE  

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK  
BRENTANO'S



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TO  
MY MOTHER

904543







## Mount Vernon







# Colonial Verses

## MOUNT VERNON

Home of our bravest and our best,  
For thee, as for a shrine,  
The pilgrims of the east and west  
Eternal laurels twine.  
A hundred years of sun and snow  
Have looked upon thine eaves,  
Have seen the early blossoms blow,  
Wept Autumn's crimson leaves.

The river, as it slips along  
To join the distant sea,  
Chants loud and clear a silver song  
To forest-land and lea.



It bears a message from afar  
Of cities strong and great,  
Each safe beneath the guardian star  
That smiles on every State.

Thy walls the Nation's secrets hold ;  
The dead—who ne'er will die—  
Were guests within thy halls of old,  
But now asleep they lie ;  
While name and fame will live for aye,  
Till pride and power cease,  
Of one who will be writ away  
The first in war or peace.



## The Drawing-Room



## THE DRAWING-ROOM

Light-hearted gallant and maid  
Here tripped a measure of yore,  
Powder and patch and brocade.

Here in close converse they strayed,  
Bright were the smiles that they wore,  
Light-hearted gallant and maid.

Mars came as Cupid arrayed,  
Donning in respite from war  
Powder and patch and brocade.

Cupid the warrior played,  
Having of arrows a store.  
Light-hearted gallant and maid.











What were the words that you said ?  
What were the vows that you swore ?  
Powder and patch and brocade.

Sad that life's roses should fade !  
Sad that we see you no more,  
Light-hearted gallant and maid ;  
Powder and patch and brocade.



## THE BANQUET-ROOM

Here once fair garlands hung,  
Here once gay laughter rung,  
Here once brave songs were sung,  
    And tales were told  
Of how, by lucky chance  
Or lofty circumstance,  
Our Godmother was France,  
    In days of old.

Men spoke of field and camp,  
Of dull suspense, or tramp  
Through evening's cold and damp  
    O'er plain and hill;  
Of how all fought, some fell—  
Brothers they had loved well,  
Whose worth they scarce could tell,  
    Whose hearts were still.











Anon, in lighter vein,  
They spoke in gayer strain,  
And mirth and wit did reign,  
    Until a toast,  
To quell unwonted zest,  
To silence gibe and jest,  
Did one and all request  
    Of their grave host.

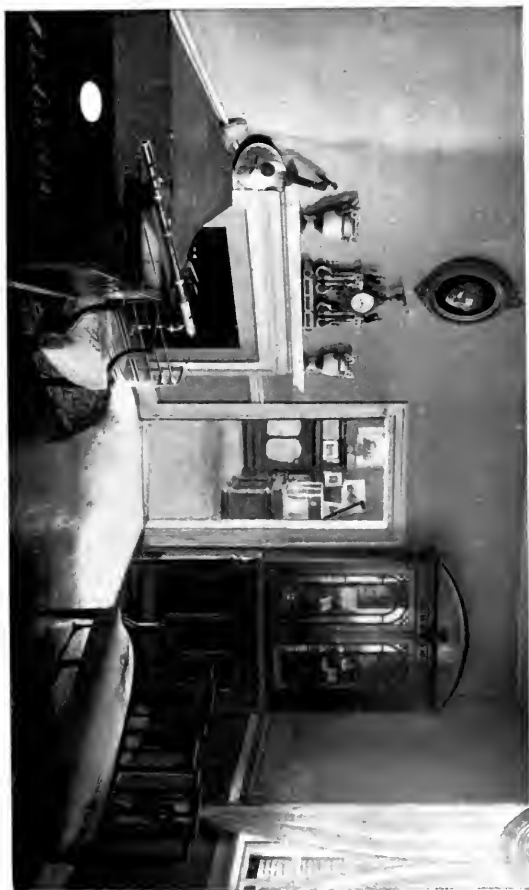
He rose, with gentle grace,  
A look upon his face  
That all within the place  
    Could understand.  
He held aloft his wine,  
“May stars forever shine  
On thee and all of thine,  
    God keep our land !”



## THE MUSIC-ROOM

Nellie Custis' spinet,  
And George Washington's flute:  
Ah ! we sigh with regret  
O'er the flute and spinet.  
There are souls in them yet—  
Though they feign to be mute ;  
Nellie Custis' spinet,  
And George Washington's flute.











## The Stairway



## THE STAIRWAY

Stairway, worn by the tread of Time,  
The echoes around thee blending  
Present and Past, in mingled chime,  
Sound clear and sweet,  
Like willing feet  
Every morn to work descending.

Slowly again they upward climb,  
The day and its cares are ending;  
Pauses—like broken staves of rhyme—  
In silence greet  
The weary feet  
Every night to rest ascending.











## Washington's Room



## WASHINGTON'S ROOM

Silent we stand beside the open door,  
And all the room beyond is bathed in light—  
The golden sunlight thou didst hail of yore ;  
The smile that kissed away the tears of  
    night,  
And in its touch God's daily promise bore,  
A benediction that put care to flight  
And gave thee strength to face the world ;  
    aye, more,  
That lit thy pathway, guiding thee aright.

How many dawns thou didst to care awake,  
Each dawn attended with new hopes and  
    fears ;  
Forever faithful, didst thy burden take,  
Praying that peace might bless the unborn  
    years,











And for thy Country and thy kindred's sake  
Toiled with a patience that all earth re-  
veres !

How many nights thy heart did well nigh  
break

To know thy Motherland was drenched with  
tears !

And it was here thou didst at last find  
rest—

The work was done, the time had come to  
sleep ;

The high, the humble, prosperous, oppressed,  
One in their sorrow, o'er thy couch did  
weep.

Our ceaseless gratitude by tongues professed,  
But in our hearts there lyeth still more  
deep

A love, which with our deeds we would  
attest

To prove us worthy of the trust we keep.



## INTERLUDE

Now from the homestead forth we stray,  
Though 'neath its porch we fain would  
    linger,  
The world without holds holiday,  
Touched by Dame Nature's jewelled finger.











## The Garden



## THE GARDEN

In the garden every year,  
When the skies wax blue and clear,  
We the Summer's footfall hear;  
    One by one  
Do the flowers re-appear  
    'Neath the sun.

Primrose buds with hearts of gold,  
Pansies, bringing thoughts of old,  
Tricked in colors manifold;  
    Mallows tall,  
Gladioli, brave and bold,  
    Guarding all.











Daffodil, and daisy white,  
With the dew bespangled bright,  
Quiver in a shy delight,  
    As they peep;  
Then they close their eyes at night,  
    Fall asleep.

There the lily sways a queen,  
And quaint rosemary we glean,  
While the hollyhock is seen  
    With the phlox,  
Twixt the borders trim and green  
    Of the box.

Like the lilt of distant streams,  
Records of remembered dreams,  
Echoes of forgotten themes,  
    Fill the air;  
Calling us away, it seems,  
    Otherwhere.



Calling us to join the throng  
That in hope and faith were strong,  
That avenged the Nation's wrong  
    With the sword ;  
That to history belong  
    For reward.

They that shone in grave debate,  
And whose counsel carried weight  
With the arbiters of State,  
    Day by day ;  
They that in the field were great,  
    Won the bay.

They that strove to set us free,  
Gave the people sovereignty,  
Bought for mankind liberty,  
    Sweet their rest ;  
For to all eternity  
    They are blest.



## The Spinning-House



## THE SPINNING-HOUSE

Merry whirring of the wheel,  
Loud the din!  
Twisting, turning speeds the reel  
Maidens spin.

Though the task their patience tax,  
They are gay;  
Lightly drawing threads of flax  
All the day.

Half in shine and half in gloom,  
Sit the throng;  
With the murmur of the loom  
Comes a song.

\* \* \* \*











In a mist of smiles and tears,  
Hark! I vow  
It still echoes through the years,  
Hear it now!

Song of old, thy sacred strain  
Pray impart,  
Let me hold thy sweet refrain  
In my heart.



## BENEATH THE TREES

Beneath the trees at even-glow  
I wander, meditative, slow,  
Where courtiers brave with gold and lace,  
Befitting well the stately place,  
Once gayly sauntered to and fro.

On velvet turf by green hedge-row  
I picture statesman, scholar, beau,  
And dainty damsel fair of face,  
Beneath the trees.

The rays upon the dial show  
How swift the deepening shadows grow.  
The noble fathers of our race  
Are gone, with all their wit and grace.  
They laid their ashes long ago  
Beneath the trees.











## Washington's Tomb



## WASHINGTON'S TOMB

Would we could coin for thee new words  
of praise ;  
To call thee only great, is meaningless ;  
Thou didst the woes of humankind redress,  
And the blest standard of our freedom  
raise ;  
Didst lead us safe o'er strange, untrodden  
ways,  
And in thy life—that did all truth express—  
Teach us thy cherished creed which we  
confess,  
The equal rights of men to crown their days.











Thou dost not sleep in sound of city's  
toil ;

The din of traffic, murmur of the mart,  
Are far away ; within thy native soil  
We leave thee, heart of honor, Honor's heart ;  
Not in cathedral's gorgeous sculptured gloom,  
But 'neath thy much loved stars, a fitter  
tomb.



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